



PRESS NOTICE

BILL NETTLES UNITED STATES ATTORNEY DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

*1441 Main Street, Suite 500 * Columbia, SC 29201 * (803) 929-3000**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT PERSON: WINSTON HOLLIDAY
Winston.Holliday@usdoj.gov
(803) 929-3079

COLUMBIA MEN SENTENCED IN FOOD STAMP FRAUD CASE

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated today that Xavier Roedran Pinckney, age 38, and George Andrew Williams, age 47, both of Columbia, were sentenced today in federal court in Columbia for participating in a Conspiracy to Commit Food Stamp Fraud, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371. United States District Judge Margaret B. Seymour sentenced Williams to five years in jail and Pinckney to 18 months in jail. In addition, Williams is responsible for over \$1.6 million in restitution. Judge Seymour previously sentenced Ulysses Williams, age 71, to 41 months in jail, and Jamal Derwin Gaines, age 24, to five years probation, for their participation in the conspiracy.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that Ulysses Williams owned and operated B&B Fruit and Vegetable, and George Williams owned

and operated Fresh Open Air Market. Both businesses were located in the Columbia area and were known to purchase SNAP (food stamp) benefits for cash and to allow the purchase of non-food items such as cigarettes and clothing using EBT cards.

Undercover operations revealed that Xavier Roedran Pinckney and Jamal Derwin Gaines manned the registers at the two stores. Individuals would come in to buy cigarettes or other low-priced items. Pinckney and Gaines would ring up the transactions for around \$80 to \$100, give the individual half and keep half. Both Williams defendants monitored these transactions and provided the cash to hand out.

Investigators compared average monthly redemptions at the two stores to the South Carolina average. B&B Fruit and Vegetable and Fresh Open Air Market's average monthly redemptions were around \$76,000 and \$94,000, respectively. For other stores of similar size located throughout South Carolina, the average was just over \$2,000 per month.

The total loss amount for the case is just over \$4,000,000.

The case was investigated by agents of the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Richland County Sheriff's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Winston D. Holliday, Jr., of the Columbia office prosecuted the case.

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